

## RUSSIA AND THE WEST IN IRAN

Shah to sue for an armistice. Peace was concluded in 1857<sup>\*n</sup> Paris. Iran renounced Herat, and thus, indirectly, Russia was deprived of an opportunity to infiltrate this buffer territory of India. Simultaneously, owing to the unsuccessful Crimean War, Russia suffered humiliation in another sector, and a semblance of balance was restored between her and Britain in Iran. The British, who could easily have annexed part of the Iranian coast on the Gulf and thus have established a naval base there, did not avail themselves of the opportunity. In contrast to Russia with her territorial advances, Britain seems to have concentrated exclusively on the search for economic advantages.

In 1872 a naturalized British subject, Baron Julius de Renter, obtained a huge concession from Shah Nasir ed-Din. The concession gave him, among other things, the exclusive right to exploit all the minerals of Iran, except gold, silver, and precious stones, and to build railways, telegraph lines, and so forth. This grant opened a new dramatic chapter that may justly be labeled as the race for concessions in Iran. The Russians, upon learning of Renter's concession, did not stand idly by. Their pressure on the Shah prompted him to cancel the grant. Thereafter a series of new concessions were given to the British to compensate them for the lost advantage, coupled with a series of concessions to the Russians. By the end of the nineteenth century most of the country's resources and technical projects were exploited or directed by foreign interests.

During this period Russian political and economic preponderance became more and more pronounced. Not only was Russia supreme in the five Iranian provinces adjoining her

borders, she also maintained a firm hold on the Shah in Teheran by granting him large loans, which he used for his own enjoyment. Russian troops were stationed in various parts of Iran, and an Iranian Cossack Brigade was officered by the Russians. Russia benefited greatly also from the special customs tariff favoring her goods. In those circumstances it is a wonder that a British subject in 1901 managed to obtain an important oil concession.

In 1906 a new era opened in Iranian history. A bloodless revolution was carried out by a few thousand merchants who sought asylum in the summer residence of the British Embassy and presented the

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